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Questions and Answers from EPA's Second National Citizens' Briefing

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Questions and Answers

from EPA's SECOND NATIONAL CITIZENS' BRIEFING

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Questions and Answers

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The Second National Citizens' Briefing sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was held in February in Washington, D.C., to up-date representatives of national citizens organizations on the new laws and other developments in EPA's various programs and to afford them the opportunity to direct questions to Agency officials.

EPA officials who participated were Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus; Deputy Administrator Robert W. Fri, and Assistant Administrators—John R. Quarles, Jr., Enforcement and General Counsel; Robert L. Sansom, Air and Water Programs; David D. Dominick, Categorical Programs; Dr. Stanley M. Greenfield, Research and Monitoring; and Thomas E. Carroll, Planning and Management, as well as other staff members.

This booklet has been prepared in response to requests that questions asked and answers given at the meeting be published for participants and other interested individuals. Included are questions and answers from morning and afternoon sessions and supplemental material supplied by EPA's program offices. Some questions have been combined to avoid duplication and to focus as clearly as possible on the major areas of concern that emerged from the all-day session.

This publication is part of EPA's continuing effort to inform citizens of the current and developing activities and programs in which the Agency is engaged in its mission of abatement and control of the Nation's environmental problems.

water program

Please explain the President's restrictions on water cleanup funds.

In directing the allocation of funds under the new water law, President Nixon said that the amounts he specified would improve water quality and yet recognize the competing national priorities for our tax dollars, the resources now available for this program, and the projected condition of the Federal Treasury under existing tax laws and the statutory limit on the national debt. Mr. Nixon said his allocation recognized the need to protect working men and women against tax increases and renewed inflation.

In his message to the Congress on the environment, Mr. Nixon again referred to the danger of inflation: "Spending still more money would not buy us more pollution control facilities, but only more expensive ones."

What steps have been taken to implement the new ocean dumping law?

EPA has proposed interim regulations to control the dumping of wastes into ocean waters. These provide for the application and issuance of permits prior to promulgation of final EPA regulations expected in August. The law requires that after April 23, 1973 a permit be obtained from EPA before transporting or dumping materials in the ocean waters. Interim permits will be issued by letter to applicants by EPA Regional Administrators. Applications must include descriptions of material to be dumped, quantity, proposed dumping site, and the activity that produced the material.

What progress is being made in coastal wetlands protection?

The EPA Administrator has issued a statement that establishes the Agency's policy to preserve the wetlands ecosystems and protect them from destruction through waste water or nonpoint source discharges. It is EPA policy to consider any proposal that has the potential to damage wetlands; to recognize their irreplaceable value and man's dependence on them; and to preserve and to protect them from damaging misuses. EPA will seek to minimize alterations in the quantity or quality of the natural flow of water that nourishes wetlands and to protect them from adverse dredging or filling practices, solid waste management practices, siltation, pesticides, salts or toxic materials arising from nonpoint source wastes and through construction activities, and to prevent violation of applicable water quality standards.

EPA will not grant Federal funds for construction of municipal waste water treatment facilities that may interfere with the existing wetland ecosystems except where no alternative of lesser environmental damage is found to be feasible. The Agency will consult with the Department of the Interior in determining the probable impact of the pollution abatement program on fish and wildlife in the wetlands, and a public hearing may be held in the event of projected significant adverse environmental impact on wetlands.

What are the major achievements of EPA's drinking water program?

In research, major achievements include establishment of studies on water-borne diseases and on various quick ways to identify, isolate and measure viruses, bacteria, chemicals and toxic agents in water. Tests have shown many intestinal viruses are more resistant to chlorination than was suspected.

In late 1972, EPA began data collection to update the 1963 national water supply inventory. It is expected to take about a year to identify and classify the more than 40,000 existing water supply systems. The new data will be key-punched and computerized to provide data analysis and print-out in a variety of forms.

EPA is responsible for certifying water supply systems serving interstate carriers and publishes a report describing the individual status of these systems semi-annually.

EPA conducts special field studies that provide information used to shape and direct research, training, standards development and technical assistance activities.

The Agency completed a Community Water Supply Study in 1970 that is a detailed evaluation of 969 community water supply systems representing a national cross-section; and a study of water supplies at Federal reservoir installations constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as studies of water supplies constructed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Similar investigations of water supplies for public use along interstate highways are underway.

Also, when requested, EPA will evaluate a State's water supply program. Results of completed evalua-

tions have enabled States to make significant program improvements.

Will there be a system for citizen involvement in the water quality monitoring program?

The current feeling is that direct monitoring of water bodies by citizens would pose difficult problems of quality control. However, States will be encouraged to train monitors, and State water quality findings will be a matter of public record. At least every three years, States must hold public hearings to review their water quality standards and, if necessary, update them subject to EPA approval. Anyone applying for a permit to discharge into the Nation's waters must obtain from the State involved, a certificate affirming that the discharge will be in compliance with Federal law. States must give public notice of all applications for certification and may hold public hearings on them. EPA and States with EPA's approval may inspect any discharging facility, and the information obtained—except for trade secrets—must be made available to the public.

In announcing guidelines and regulations, why has EPA rejected well-articulated recommendations of participating citizens?

Many citizen recommendations have been incorporated verbatim. In some cases, recommendations were felt to be unduly explicit and, therefore, inappropriate for incorporation into regulations. Some are appropriate and are being woven into programs. If a citizen feels a recommendation was given short shrift, he may resubmit it to the appropriate EPA office for additional consideration despite the lapse of a deadline for comment.

How can an individual find out what discharge permit applications have been filed for a particular section of a river?

EPA regional offices will have such information. If a State has EPA approval to operate a permit program, the State water pollution control agency will also have it.

Can an individual take action through EPA if he wishes to oppose issuance of a permit?

The new water law requires EPA, or a State authorized by EPA to operate a permit program, to issue public notice of every application for a permit to discharge into the water. Comments from the public will be invited. If there is sufficient interest, a public hearing on the application will be held at which individual opposition may be voiced.

When will EPA publish guidelines for a nonpoint source permit program?

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 do not authorize EPA to establish such guidelines. The law calls on States to submit to EPA by 1975 a report, including a description of the nature and extent of nonpoint sources of pollutants and recommendations as to programs that must be undertaken to control them.

Please discuss the deadlines in the new water law for water quality standards.

Plans for implementing the water quality standards provisions of the law are on schedule. They call for EPA to promulgate revised interstate standards by October 1973, intrastate standards for States with existing intrastate standards by December 1973, and intrastate standards for States that do not have them by April 1974.

Please discuss status of point-sources regulations as they relate to agricultural pollution.

Short Form B, a proposed application form for agricultural point-source permits was published in the **Federal Register** on Dec. 5, 1972. An EPA working group after meeting with key agricultural State representatives and with environmental groups is drafting proposed regulations.

What agricultural sources have been identified as point sources?

At present, confined animal production facilities of 1000 or more animal units are required to make application for permits to discharge. Irrigation projects of more than 3000 acres that drain into discrete return flow systems have also been identified as point sources and will be required to obtain permits.

What plans exist to distribute sewage sludge over farmlands and forest soils?

EPA is developing an overall sludge disposal policy, and is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and with some States in regard to handling such solid wastes. Specific plans will exist only on a project-by-project basis since the feasibility of land disposal depends on many things, including climate, soil type, ground water table and land availability.

Has EPA worked with the Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP) in controlling silt flowing into streams?

Many activities related to those covered by REAP have been and continue as part of many of EPA's ongoing activities. Interagency coordinating relationships are being strengthened to make the best use of available resources and personnel in this problem area. EPA's nonpoint source control programs are coordinated with the Department of Agriculture programs. EPA has encouraged and will continue to encourage model state laws controlling sedimentation due to runoff.

federal grants for sewage treatment

Please name three specific criteria that determine cost effectiveness?

Although total cost is a basic criteria for system selection, reliability and flexibility criteria, maintaining environmental quality, and minimizing social impact are also important. The latter criteria include the contributions of the entire system, or individual projects, toward achieving and maintaining water quality goals, given continually changing conditions. The possibility of utilizing present facilities, where upgrading may be the most cost-effective solution, should be a first consideration. And, opportunities for reuse and recycling, or perhaps land treatment of waste water, must also be explored, especially where its feasibility and resource management needs are favorable.

Which agencies (EPA, State or local agencies) set the parameters for collection of data or preparation of studies and alternatives?

EPA prepares guidelines and regulations for the minimum information required to evaluate alternative methods. This does not preclude State or local governments from providing additional information or from requiring more stringent parameters.

Can citizen suits against either the applicant or EPA force consideration of additional data collected by interested groups, if not formally submitted to the Administrator as part of the grant application?

If the additional data collected is actually relevant to the grant application, it will be considered without having to resort to court action. In the event that interested groups are not satisfied with the results of such evaluation, Section 505 of the 1972 Amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act outlines procedures for citizen suits.

What percentage of the allocated water treatment facility construction monies have been expended in the past, by year? What are the projections for FY 1973? 1974?

If you mean the percentage of appropriated funds that were obligated per year, then practically all funds that were appropriated have been obligated for each year.

Have otherwise acceptable grant applications been turned down in the past for lack of funds?

No. EPA does not turn down acceptable grant applications because it is a State responsibility to forward only those applications that have priority over other eligible projects that are certified for funding. The funding of projects cannot exceed the allocation of Federal funds to the individual States.

Is it likely that some projects will be under the announced spending levels for FY 1973 and 1974?

Within the announced spending levels of Federal funds for FY 1973 and 1974, there probably will be a number of projects that will be delayed in construction.

What percentage of the total funds for the water grant program are especially allocated by the Agency (i.e., not according to the State allotment formula established by the Congress)? Are such funds taken from the initial pool, or redirected from unexpended but previously allocated funds?

In fiscal years 1967 to 1969 when appropriations were $150 million, $203 million and $214 million respectively, reallotments of approximately $8 million were made in each of these years based on unobligated balances at the end of the obligating period. These monies were redistributed to the States on the basis of their initial allocation. None was used for discretionary purposes.

In FY 1971, the $1 billion appropriation was allocated in two portions, $800 million based on the existing formula [population ($750 million) and inverse per capita income ($50 million)] and $200 million was for "reimbursement or severe pollution problems." The $150 million of the $200 million was used for reimbursable projects in the States, and the remaining $50 million (of the $200 million) was used by the Administrator to assist in the financing of the Blue Plains project. These funds (the $200 million) were allocated and obligated in May 1971. Beginning in July 1971, the unobligated balance of the $800-million, FY-70 appropriation and the unobligated balance of the $800-million portion of the FY-71 appropriation was made available for use as discretionary funds. These amounts total approximately $87 million, $31 million from FY-70 and $56 million from FY-71. On a percentage basis, $87 million is about 5½ percent of $1.6 billion. These funds have virtually all been obligated.

Please explain the formula that EPA will use in allocating water bill waste treatment plant construction funds among the States.

The formula adopted was based on the 1971 needs survey. The percentage the various States and Territories were to receive was based upon their proportionate part of the total needs of the United States. These percentages were published in the **Federal Register** of Dec. 8, 1972 and also repeated in the Title II Regulations published on Feb. 28, 1973. The absolute amounts for 1973 and 1974 were also published at the same time.

Before allotment to the States of FY 1975 funds, the law calls for a needs survey that is expected to be completed by June 1973. It will be presented to Congress for passage of a law establishing the new percentages of funds that each State will receive.

If a State agency refuses to assume authority in issuing permits, how will this affect that State's sewage treatment plant construction grants?

Assuming a State agency refuses to accept responsibility of a permit program, Section 402 of the Act provides that EPA may run the permit program for that State. This should not significantly affect the waste treatment construction grant program of that State, because even when the EPA runs the permit program, the State has a certification responsibility that will affect the permit processing procedure and the conditions of the permit. The State is not precluded from exercising any of its grant-making authority.

When will guidelines be available for municipal sewage treatment plant grants, especially Section 204 limitations and conditions?

Interim regulations governing grants for construction of treatment works were published in the **Federal Register** on Feb. 28. 1973. Regulations and guidelines concerning Section 204 user charges are scheduled for completion by April 18, 1973.

What difficulties has EPA faced in publishing guidelines required under the new Water Act?

The major problem has been in meeting a vast array of deadlines within a very limited time. There is a conflict, in many instances, between meeting a Congressionally mandated deadline with inadequate or inferior standards and theoretically violating the law by missing a deadline in order to develop a rigorous and comprehensive set of guidelines. The Administrator has told EPA people to do the best job they can in meeting these deadlines, but that if a deadline is missed we will take whatever consequences may ensue in order to get **good** guidelines. We want to avoid trying to implement this Act with faulty or incomplete standards that have to be changed later as new data becomes available.

We do, however, expect the guidelines for secondary waste treatment to be finished soon. Setting toxic pollutant standards is extremely difficult and complex, and we have admittedly missed the deadline for publishing these. We did come out with an initial list but sent it back for review and additions at the request of citizen organizations. Compounding the difficulty with setting standards is the fact that effluent limitations for these pollutants must be set in the not-too-distant future (six months from standard). In the end, however, we expect to develop good standards that will get the job done right.

Why did the Administration impound such a large portion of the funds for waste treatment facilities authorized under the Water Act?

After careful consideration, it was concluded that use of the impounded funds would still not enable affected communities to build waste treatment facilities in time to meet the 1977-78 standards. There was deep skepticism about the capacity of the construction industry to absorb all the funds, and the Administration felt that even if all the funds could be effectively allocated, the inflationary impact would be unacceptable. Finally, the President, by necessity, must view every piece of legislation in the total context of priorities and allocate his resources as he best sees fit.

Assuming that deadlines for secondary waste treatment cannot be met in the 1977-78 timeframe, will permits be issued to those communities failing to meet the deadline?

We have no answer to that question. We have a choice between not issuing permits in response to an unreasonable deadline and being technically in violation of the law by issuing permits to communities that can't meet the deadlines. It is not a "happy" alternative to contemplate.

One reason we cannot meet these standards by 1978 is that many of the secondary waste treatment plants simply cannot be completed before 1979-1980 regardless of whether or not the impounded funds are allocated. We are studying the interlocking effects of time limits, funding and permits.

What is the current status of the Blue Plains Treatment Plant?

We have had a number of problems in meeting our deadline for secondary waste treatment at Blue Plains. Originally, we had hoped to achieve these standards by 1974, using guidelines drawn up under previous legislation by the Department of Interior before EPA was formed. The specific problems today include;

1. Congress has not given EPA the 10 to 20 percent discretionary funds for either our 1972 or 1973 fiscal budgets that we requested. These funds, which had been available in our 1971 budget, were to be used to finance high priority projects where EPA and the affected States had agreed to an abatement schedule. Blue Plains was one such project. Discretionary funds were needed so that we could pick and choose the most important projects for attention rather than using a blanket, nationwide funding operation that would have been inflationary.

2. Assistance for Blue Plains also suffered during the Congressional debate between House and Senate versions of the Act. During this eight-month period, Congress allocated funds "at three-month increments" that caused additional delays.

3. We are continuing to work to find a solution to the Blue Plains funding problem that is within the requirement of the presently effective funding laws.

air program

What hard evidence does EPA have that air quality has improved over the past year?

There is little "hard" evidence because such conclusions would have to be based on measurements of air quality. Over a one-year span, changes in such measures are not necessarily conclusive because some of the measured differences could be due to changes in weather conditions or in localized short-term fluctuations.

However, studies made by the Council on Environmental Quality indicate improvements between 1969 and 1970, based on changes in various indices that included emissions data as well as air quality data.

It is important to recognize that improvements resulting from the Clean Air Amendments of 1970 are only now beginning to take effect and that, in accordance with the timetables spelled out in the Act, dramatic improvements will not be evident for some time. Because these improvements will take place gradually, the public often may find it difficult to believe that they are taking place. But, air quality will improve, because the standards that have been set are good standards and stringent ones.

What are the toxic effects of air pollutants?

EPA so far has set standards for six classes of pollutants. Briefly, their effects on health are:

Sulfur oxides—Their presence has been associated with increased incidence of respiratory diseases among children as well as adults, increased symptoms of chronic lung disease, and increased mortality.

Particulate matter—By itself or in association with other pollutants, it may injure the lungs or cause adverse effects elsewhere in the body.

Carbon monoxide—Decreases the oxygen-carrying ability of the blood and, at levels often found in city air, may impair mental processes.

Photochemical oxidants—These pollutants irritate mucous membranes, and reduce resistance to respiratory infection.

Hydrocarbons—Some hydrocarbons combine with nitrogen oxides in the air to form photochemical oxidants. The hydrocarbon standards, therefore, are a guide in devising implementation plans to achieve the oxidant standards, as well as to protect public health.

Nitrogen oxides—The presence of nitrogen dioxide in the air has been associated with a variety of respiratory diseases. Nitrogen dioxide is essential in the production of photochemical oxidants.

Does the Agency have the authority, or will it request the authority to regulate such things as automobile weight or fuel consumption as a means of conserving energy?

No, we do not have such authority. As spelled out in the 1970 Clean Air Act, EPA's authority is directed toward establishing air pollution emission standards for new vehicles. Since those standards apply to all passenger cars equally, they all have to meet the same standard, regardless of vehicle weight, engine size, or differences in vehicle design.

While it is true that, all other things being equal, a heavier car uses more fuel than a lighter one, it does not emit more air pollutants. The extra fuel is used to push along the extra weight. It must be remembered that the air pollution emission standards for motor vehicles are set in terms of an allowable amount of pollution the car may emit during one mile of travel.

Whether authority to regulate weight or fuel consumption should be requested, and where that authority should rest, is a complex question, and will require a full examination of all of the factors relating to the energy crisis. Clearly, steps must be taken to discourage the inefficient use of our scarce petroleum resources. But history offers little hope that either the consumer or the automobile manufacturer will shift to less energy-intensive forms of travel without incentives provided directly by the Federal government.

The question then becomes one of the nature of the government action. Should the problem be approached directly through mandatory changes in engine design, aerodynamic and roll resistance, power matching and vehicle weight, or should the approach be indirect in the form of incentives, such as taxes?

Steps must be taken, and taken soon to reduce the amount of gasoline consumed by the automobile. But the need to do so goes beyond the need to solve the automobile air pollution problem. Therefore, a determination of the steps to be taken requires coordinated effort among several Federal agencies. This effort is underway and, hopefully, we will have firmer answers soon.

What happened to the proposed tax on SO_x emissions?

It is still under active consideration but no formal proposal has been made yet.

Why is EPA on the wrong side of the nondegradation issue?

We don't feel that we are, that is why we are appealing the case to the United States Supreme Court. Section 110 of the Clean Air Act states that if the States submit implementation plans that meet the primary and secondary standards, EPA must approve them. We don't think that the Congress intended that the States make provisions for nondegradation in their implementation plans. Obviously, the issue is unresolved.

What does EPA propose to do about exhaust emissions from diesels and other big trucks?

Last September, EPA set standards for 1974 and later model-year, heavy-duty diesel engines. Exhaust emissions from both heavy-duty gasoline and diesel engines will be limited to 16 grams per-brake-horsepower-hour for hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides combined, and carbon monoxide will be limited to 40 gram/BHP-Hr. Diesel-smoke-emissions standards will be 20 percent of measured plume opacity during acceleration and 15 percent opacity during uphill climbs. These represent a tightening-up of standards set several years ago for all heavy-duty engines.

What will be the economic effects of various auto control strategies?

We are not satisfied with existing data in this area and are in the process of making our own analysis The information should be available within a few months.

What are some of the other alternatives to gas rationing in terms of controlling pollution from cars?

Land-use control, work-schedule changes, retrofitting of older vehicles, inspection and maintenance programs, traffic flow techniques, and improved urban mass transportation are some of the alternatives.

Did the Administrator imply that alternatives to restrictions on automobile use exist in a transportation strategy for the Los Angeles Basin?

Yes. The proposal offered was the only one we could come up within the time available that would demonstrably achieve the required standard by the statutory deadline. Several alternatives were considered, but in order to achieve the standard, vehicle miles traveled must be reduced drastically, by one means or another.

What is the status of the St. Louis environmental study?

There are essentially five parts to this study: instrumentation for aerosols, analysis of photochemical processes, meteorological studies, health effects, and development of a monitoring network. The first four elements are already under way, and we are in the process of selecting a contractor for the fifth. Current level of funding is over $5 million. St. Louis and the Russian city of Leningrad have been designated as joint international study cities as part of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection approved last year by the President. The first group of Russian scientists is expected to visit the study site sometime this year.

Will EPA recommend more stringent standards for air pollution control devices in later model cars?

While we have the authority to do so, there are a number of factors that will have to be determined before we make a decision. One factor will be determined during the course of hearings we will conduct (beginning March 12) to determine whether automobile manufacturers can, in fact, meet the standards we set for pollution control devices on 1975 automobiles.*

If EPA believes that there is not a proven SO_x removal technology for power plants, why have air pollution research funding requests been reduced?

We feel that the technology has been adequately demonstrated, and since we are not starting any new major demonstration projects, funding for this work is naturally dropping.

*EPA Administrator Ruckelshaus granted automakers a one-year extension to meet standards on April 11.

pesticides program

When may we expect EPA to issue regulations for State enforcement of the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act as it applies to commercial pesticide applicators?

The new Act allows four years for development of State certification programs. Federal standards for certification must be set forth by EPA by October 1973, and the States must submit their certification programs based on these standards to the Agency by 1975. Such plans are to be approved by the EPA Administrator within one year of submission or by October 1976.

When will the list of restricted-use pesticides be published in the Federal Register?

EPA must publish criteria for classification of pesticides for general use or restricted use in the **Federal Register** by October 1974. Actual classification of pest control chemicals based on these criteria must be completed within two years after that date. Those pesticides placed in the restricted category may be used by, or under the supervision of, certified applicators or under such other conditions as the EPA Administrator may require to protect man and the environment.

How much Federal effort is being put into development of pesticides to replace those taken away?

The development of new pesticide products is the responsibility of manufacturers. Before a new product can be marketed anywhere in the United States, it must first be registered with the EPA on the basis of both effectiveness and safety to the user, plants, domestic animals, wildlife and the environment. The Federal government is responsible only for the regulation of pesticides, not their development.

On the other hand, government agencies—including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and EPA—are spending millions of dollars annually to develop alternate or non-pesticide methods of pest control. These include work on insect sterilization, introduction of predators and parasites, chemical sex attractants, breeding of crop varieties genetically resistant to pests, the use of ultraviolet light and ultrasound, virus insecticides, and many other highly sophisticated methods of control. Integrated pest management programs using a variety of these alternate techniques in combination with necessary amounts of conventional pesticides are receiving considerable attention from government agencies working in cooperation with universities and other private institutions.

solid waste program

What role is EPA taking to encourage the use of secondary material and to encourage resource recovery generally?

EPA has taken an active role in this field and will continue to do so. We have been involved in cases before the Federal Maritime Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission in an effort to insure that freight rates do not discriminate against shipment of the secondary material. EPA also is supporting a

number of demonstrations of new technology in resource recovery of solid wastes.

What is EPA's position on legislation regulating soft drink and beer container disposal?

EPA has not taken a position on what legislation, if any, is needed. We are following the implementation of a new mandatory deposit law enacted in Oregon in October 1972 that requires a five-cent deposit on all beer and carbonated soft drink bottles and cans, and a two-cent deposit on bottles without imprints. It represents the best demonstration of an approach as yet not fully tested. EPA has given Oregon a $50,000 grant to evaluate the law's effect on litter, on industry, and on consumer attitudes.

Is EPA supporting research on the conversion of solid waste into fertilizers or soil substitutes?

EPA has supported two demonstrations—one with the Tennessee Valley Authority at Johnson City, Tenn., and the other at Gainesville, Fla.—to investigate and demonstrate the economic and technical feasibility of composting municipal refuse. So far, EPA's studies and demonstrations indicate that only a small fraction of the waste generated in a community could be converted into, and marketed as compost. However, if sanitary landfills and incineration become more expensive, composting may become a more important process for municipal waste disposal.

What is being done to promote the increased use of recycled materials by the Federal government?

The Federal government has a number of programs to expand its use of recycled materials, particularly the reuse of waste paper.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the General Services Administration (GSA) have been working together to develop ways that can provide the leadership to encourage the use of recycled waste paper.

GSA is aiming for maximum use of reclaimed fibers, not only paper used by consumers, but also forest residues and certain manufacturing paper wastes.

GSA's current procurement specifications cover more than 72 of 144 paper products that range from a requirement of about 5 percent to 100 percent recycled fiber content. Corrugated fiberboard purchased by the Federal government, for example, requires 35 percent waste fiber, and certain packaged items, such as hardware and tools, must be packaged in fiberboard containing recycled fiber.

EPA has been authorized to use recycled paper for its newsletters and bulletins on an experimental basis. When the test is completed, the U.S. Government Printing Office will evaluate and report on its findings, and make recommendations for the use of recycled paper by other Federal agencies. Also under study is the feasibility of reusing other waste-based materials such as lubrication products and building and construction materials.

radiation program

What progress is being made in reducing unnecessary exposure to radiation?

Considerable progress is being made. The amount of radiation released into the environment from nuclear power plants is very low, often difficult to detect. Even so, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) is developing a standard limiting plant emissions that is far more stringent than the standard now in use. EPA is reviewing AEC's standard to determine if additional standards limiting radiation outside the grounds of nuclear facilities are needed. EPA has the authority to set such standards.

To date, the greatest source of exposure to man-made

radiation is from x-ray equipment used by physicians and dentists. Here, there also has been progress. A new performance standard established by HEW and designed to reduce exposure from new x-ray machines used for diagnosis is scheduled to go into effect on Aug. 15, 1973.

What are you doing about the environmental risk of reactor accidents?

EPA is working actively on assessing the potential risks from accidents and community emergency plans in the event of an accident. Unfortunately, the potential environment risk from reactor accidents is not known. EPA studies and those AEC will make over the next two to three years will significantly improve our information and knowledge. EPA currently believes that the uncertainties in environmental and public health risks are offset by the risks associated with other alternatives (including that of foregoing the power), and that continued study is necessary in view of the large number of plants anticipated over the next few decades. Supporting EPA's position is the fact that no known major environmental impact has ever occurred from a reactor accident in the history of the program and the AEC technical staff's confidence that the possibility of such an accident is remote. Nonetheless, significant efforts are being made by EPA and AEC to assure that the environmental risk remains at a level consistent with general societal values.

It is generally acknowledged that environmental levels of nonionizing radiation are increasing because both the number and the power of sources are increasing. What action has EPA taken to determine environmental levels of nonionizing radiation?

There are two factors involved in this problem. One is the radiation level in the immediate vicinity of high-power sources where few people might be exposed but where levels may be high enough to cause concern. EPA has a measurements program underway to determine radiation levels in the environs of high-powered sources.

The other factor is the general ambient radiation level from overlapping sources to which the entire population is exposed. The effects of long-term exposure to low levels of nonionizing radiation are not known, but several agencies, including EPA, are conducting research to determine the existence and health implications of low-level effects. EPA is also developing a monitoring program to determine actual ambient environmental levels that should be fully operational by July 1974.

How can we proceed with the development of nuclear power without a permanent solution to the radioactive waste problem?

A permanent method for storing radioactive wastes has not been developed, but means are available to safely maintain these materials outside man's biosphere. EPA is proposing a program to assess the relative risks of proposed storage methods; this will aid in the selection of a permanent method with full awareness of all the long-term implications.

What has EPA done to reduce the radiation exposures of underground uranium miners?

Safety of uranium miners is the responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior by regulations under the Federal Metal and Nonmetallic Mine Safety Act. EPA's Office of Radiation Programs issued guidelines in 1971 restricting the exposure of uranium miners to protect their health. The Office also reviews inspection reports of underground uranium mines prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, and assists the Bureau wherever possible in developing appropriate regulations.

noise program

What really significant powers does the Noise Control Act of 1972 give EPA?

EPA is required to set and enforce noise-emission standards considered feasible for products that the Agency identifies as major sources of noise. These include construction equipment, transportation equipment (except aircraft), all motors and engines, and electrical and electronic equipment. EPA also has the

authority to require labeling of consumer products as to their noise-generating characteristics or their effectiveness in reducing noise.

EPA is required to set noise-emission standards for the operation of equipment and facilities of interstate railroads, trucks, and buses. And EPA is required by mid-1973 to make a comprehensive study of aircraft noise and submit to Congress and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), proposed regulations to control noise and sonic booms. If FAA rejects any new proposed regulations, that agency must publicly explain its reasons.

EPA is also responsible for coordinating all Federal noise control activities. Each agency must consult with EPA in proposing any noise standards or regulations, and EPA has the authority to request a review of these standards if it believes they are inadequate to protect the public health and welfare.

How will the Noise Control Act be implemented?

EPA is operating on a tight time schedule, much of which is required by the law. The proposed dates for various regulatory actions and related enforcement responsibilities are:

Interstate carriers—Standards must be set by October 1973 and will be enforced by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Major noise sources—(1) by July 1973, publication of criteria on all identifiable effects of noise on public health and welfare; (2) by October 1973, publication of data on safe levels of environmental noise; (3) by April 1974, publication of a report or series of reports identifying products that are major sources of noise and proposed initial regulations to control noise from these products; and (4) by October 1974, standards based on proposed regulations go into effect. An enforcement plan has not been fully worked out, but the approach will probably vary, depending on the type of equipment and method of manufacture.

Product labeling—Procedures for implementing this section of the Act will be published in the **Federal Register.** Tentative date for publication of first regulations is April 1974.

Aircraft noise—(1) July 1973, special report must be made to Congress; and (2) by October 1973, report is due to the FAA on proposed changes in existing and new regulations.

What funds are being committed to the implementation of the Noise Act?

For FY 1974, the total budget is $4.03 million—$550,000 is for research and development; the remainder for abatement and control.

How does EPA intend to fulfill its responsibility as coordinator of Federal noise programs with respect to the occupational environment?

EPA has a non-voting member on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Noise Advisory Committee, and can exert its influence through this means. Moreover, if at any time the Administrator has reason to believe that a standard or proposed standard does not adequately protect public health and welfare, he may request the appropriate agency to review and report on the advisability of revising that standard. Both EPA's request and answer must be published in the **Federal Register.** In addition, EPA periodically must publish a report on the status of Federal noise control activities, including an assessment of each agency's programs.

What will be the required credentials of those making noise measurements?

The EPA Office of Noise Abatement and Control (ONAC) is developing a training program for noise control technicians. Although specific credentials are not yet required, a certification procedure will be established.

Will the ONAC utilize information gathered by NASA and DOT in the implementation of the Noise Control Act?

Yes. We will work with other government officials and use this data as much as possible. This will be necessary because of time and budget constraints and to avoid duplication.

What can local citizens groups and service organizations do to help?

Citizens groups are urged to submit comments to the ONAC, especially as notices and advance notices of proposed regulations appear in the **Federal Register.** Citizens can also help by identifying local problems and making the Federal government aware of them. ONAC has maintained a flow of information to inform and stimulate the general public, and is expanding this program as a result of the Noise Control Act of 1972.

How do EPA's new noise regulations square with the Administration's position on building the SST?

We will recommend to the FAA ways to reduce noise in aircraft generally and in an American SST specifically. At present, the noise from the foreign-built SST exceeds current FAA regulations. Development of an SST in this country will have to meet noise standards even more stringent than the current FAA regulations. Also, we are exploring ozone levels in the upper atmosphere and the effect of air traffic there, and we are working to determine whether EPA has the authority to set standards for these pollutants.

general

Please comment on possible duplication of EPA's research programs with those of other Federal agencies.

Since EPA's research funds are relatively small—about 15 percent of the total Federal expenditure in environmental research—the Agency tries to avoid any duplication of activities. In addition, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Office of Science and Technology (OST) have had various committees on environmental health and ecology research that were responsible for an overview of all Federal research in these areas. While some may be disbanded with the phaseout of OST, their functions will probably be taken up by new committees under the National Science Foundation, CEQ, etc. Finally, the Office of Management and Budget maintains a continuing review of all environmental R & D activities.

What role is EPA playing in land-use planning?

The importance of land-use planning as an integral part of environmental improvement is now recognized, especially as it involves the kinds of development that should take place and how rapidly each should occur.

EPA has participated with the Department of Interior and other government agencies to develop an Administration position that is comprehensive and workable. Our position is close to legislation sponsored by Senator Henry Jackson. The Jackson bill, however, approaches land use from the position of broad planning, while the Administration's plan focuses more clearly on controls and regulations.

Both, however, stress the need for sanctions. For example, EPA would support a reduction in Federal grants for highways, airports and other major construction if they do not contain measures for good land-use planning.

Local zoning is also important since it is the only effective way that rational land-use measures can be implemented. There are problems, however—Washington cannot draw up land-use plans or local zoning ordinances for the entire country, on the other hand, local zoning too often falls victim to influential local interests. We would work to require States to develop systems that would permit rational development.

Finally, citizen involvement is desperately needed at the local level if land-use planning is to be rational and effective.

What is EPA's role in inner city improvement and general problems of the urban environment?

Inner city environmental problems have special importance because it is in these areas that air and water degradation tend to be the most severe. One major difficulty has been in convincing minority group leaders that our stress on environmental issues is not a diversionary move to focus attention away from other issues. It is not an easy message to communicate.

Our Public Affairs Office has worked to communicate environmental problems to the inner city. Our Office of Civil Rights and Urban Affairs was formed specifically to pay more attention to urban problems and to work with minority groups and other inner city dwellers. We want to treat the inner city in its totality rather than incrementally.

We must make it clear, however, that EPA has neither the resources nor the programs to solve every urban problem. Neither will we be taking up the slack or responsibility of other agencies. Urban problems are many, and they will require the efforts of other Federal agencies, State and local governments and of the citizens.

In what ways has EPA involved itself in environmental education activities, and what future role will it play in view of the projected termination of HEW's Office of Environmental Education in FY 1973?

We have no immediate answer as to how developments affecting HEW's Office of Environmental Education might affect our own programs. Our Office of Education and Manpower Planning currently concerns itself with four areas related to environmental education—operator-training programs, graduate-level training, general-environmental training, and in-house training for EPA personnel. We are reviewing our graduate-level training in the availability of student loans for this course of study. In addition, the need to stimulate people to pursue graduate studies is less because of the higher salaries offered, while the need for personnel in undergraduate and technical courses is currently greater.

The Office of Public Affairs is also involved in environmental education. It produces informative publications for the general public and provides speakers for schools, professional associations, citizen organiza-

[illegible] and others interested in environmental improvement.

The funding for environmental education programs within EPA and the scope of these programs is still under review.

Will EPA fund citizen organizations and community groups to carry out programs in environmental education?

If you mean programs such as "Citizen Brochure Lobby," you must realize that this program was undertaken to educate citizens so that they could effectively participate in State hearings concerned with their implementation plans. We will continue to make contract funds available for specific Agency purposes, but we cannot give general grants for environmental education or other programs that further only the objectives of citizen organizations requesting these funds, although we recognize that citizen organizations are oftentimes the best source for carrying out effective environmental education programs.

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